

Negotiations – Legal Finding of Fact

Under provisions of Idaho law, the A&B Irrigation District filed a formal “water call” with the Director of the Idaho Department of Water Resources, demanding that he curtail junior water users in order to make available water to which the District has a right. The Director requested that Department personnel analyze evapotranspiration data for the irrigation district and several surrounding areas. His goal was to understand whether or not any particular area appeared to be short of water. The Department used Landsat thermal data in the METRIC evapotranspiration model to compare the amount of evapotranspiration for the designated areas. This comparison was one Finding of Fact included in the Director’s formal legal Order in response to the irrigation district’s water call.

Department analysts looked at both the relative amount of evapotranspiration (left, below) on three available dates of Landsat data, and looked at the amount of evapotranspiration per amount of vegetation (right, below). The amount of evapotranspiration per amount of vegetation is a way to even out the results by taking into account the different water needs of different crops. In this application, Landsat thermal data were used as the basis of an analysis that became part of a legal Order issued by the Idaho Department of Water Resources.

